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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 002425

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [KWBG](#) [JO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: SENIOR MFA AND MOD OFFICIALS DESCRIBE COMPLEX  
RELATIONS WITH JORDAN

REF: A. TEL AVIV 2234

[B](#). TEL AVIV 2227

[C](#). AMMAN 2353

[D](#). AMMAN 2352

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Luis G. Moreno, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#). (S) Summary. In separate meetings October 28 and 29, MOD Pol-Mil Director Gilad and MFA Deputy Director General Hadas described different aspects of Israel's complex relations with Jordan. Gilad effusively praised security cooperation with Jordan, calling it the "main pillar" of Israel's security, although he acknowledged tensions over Jerusalem and described Israeli-Jordanian ties as "peace with the regime, not the people." Gilad said he had urged the Jordanians to moderate their public comments on Israeli security measures in Jerusalem's Old City. Hadas stressed that Israel has no intention of undermining Jordan's role in Jerusalem, and he described quiet cooperation between the Israel National Police and the Jordanian Waqf in maintaining order on the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. Hadas blamed Jewish extremists as partly responsible for stirring up trouble in the Old City, but stressed that the INP are going to great lengths to avoid exacerbating the situation. Hadas sharply criticized public statements by Jordanian officials accusing Israel of tunneling under the Al-Aqsa Mosque, noting the the GOJ knows perfectly well that Israel has no intention of harming the Islamic holy places. He described the situation as Jordan complaining if Israel acts to maintain order on the Haram, while the Waqf would lose control to Islamic radicals if Israel did not act. Hadas suggested that Jordanian Prince Ghazi is providing King Abdullah with inaccurate reports about Israeli actions in Jerusalem. The King knows Israel will not "set the Mount on fire," but does not talk to Israelis directly. Hadas asked the U.S to send a message to the Jordanians that Israel has no intention of changing the status quo on the Haram and that better cooperation is needed on the Jordanian side. End Summary.

[2](#). (S) MOD Pol-Mil Director Amos Gilad, in an October 28 meeting with Deputy Special Envoy Fred Hof and PolCouns, praised Jordan's security role as "exceptional," and called Jordan the "pillar" of Israel's security. The GID is very successful in preventing Jihadi terrorists from launching attacks against Israel from Jordan. Gilad said he personally has "great relations" with the Jordanian army commander as well as the GID director. Gilad acknowledged that the Jordanians have become very angry about Jerusalem, but he said he has urged them to lower the tone of their rhetoric. Gilad said the Israel National Police are doing a great job in maintaining order on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, and are conducting their operations with great sensitivity, but the Jordanians cannot admit this publicly. Gilad commented that with regard to both Jordan and Egypt, Israel has "peace with the regimes, but not with the people." Gilad concluded that it was difficult for him to imagine Israel's security

without Jordan.

¶3. (C) MFA Deputy Director General for the Middle East Yacov Hadas-Handelsman, a former ambassador to Jordan, assured PolCouns October 29 that Israel has no intention of undermining Jordan's role in Jerusalem. Hadas-Handelsman noted, however, that the Jordanians have a much broader interpretation of Article Nine of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty, and even sometimes assert a Jordanian right to a role in the handling of Muslim sites in West Jerusalem, such as the Mamilla Cemetery, which Hadas-Handelsman insisted falls under sovereign Israeli control.

¶4. (C) Turning to the disturbances on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount over the Jewish High Holidays, Hadas-Handelsman blamed "provocations" by a small group of Jewish extremists whom "no one in Israel pays any attention to," for triggering a countering action by members of the Northern Branch of the Israeli Islamic Movement (refs A and B), whose leader, Sheikh Raed Saleh, Hadas-Handelsman said is banned from entering Jordan. He said the Jordanian Government is well aware that the GOI and INP would not allow any Jewish extremist assault on the Haram. He described the situation as one in which Jordan complains if Israel acts to maintain order, but Jordan will lose control of the Haram if Israel does not act.

¶5. (C) Hadas-Handelsman said the Jordanian Waqf is in regular contact with the INP. The Waqf must cope with efforts by a range of groups, including the Israeli Islamic Movement, Hamas, the generally non-violent but nonetheless ideologically extreme Hizb Al-Tahrir, and elements of the

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Palestinian Authority, which are all vying for control of the Haram. The Waqf frequently asks the INP to help them control these elements, but then criticizes Israeli actions publicly.

Hadas-Handelsman gave the example of clashes at the Mughrabi Gate entrance of the Haram on October 25, during which he said INP actions were carefully coordinated with the Waqf, which received assurances that the police would not enter the mosques. As a result, the disturbances were contained with a minimal number of injured and a few arrests.

Hadas-Handelsman said the MFA was angered by a statement the same day by Jordanian Information Minister Sharif, who accused Israel of "fanning the flames" in Jerusalem.

¶6. (C) PolCouns mentioned reports earlier in October that King Abdullah was considering withdrawing the Jordanian Ambassador from Israel. Hadas-Handelsman noted that he was aware of these reports, adding that the Jordanians had said nothing to the GOI directly, but had instead briefed the U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, whom they knew would discuss it with the Israeli Ambassador. Hadas-Handelsman described Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, who serves as King Abdullah's adviser on Islamic affairs, as "increasingly religious" and as someone who tells the King that Israel is "up to no good" in Jerusalem. Hadas-Handelsman commented that in his assessment, King Abdullah knows full well that Israel has no intention of provoking a crisis in Jerusalem, but the King at this point is not talking directly to Israelis. He complained that Jordanian officials are compounding the problem by publicly asserting that Israel is tunneling under the Haram in an effort to cause the mosques to collapse. This kind of rhetoric further poisons Jordanian public opinion, which the GOJ then cites as the reason for their need to adopt tough positions against Israel.

¶7. (C) Due to the tenuous nature of the Jordanian-Israeli political relationship, Hadas-Handelsman said it would be helpful if the U.S. would convey to the Jordanian leadership that Israel has no intention of undermining Jordan's role on the Haram, Israel seeks better dialogue and cooperation with Jordan on issues of mutual concern, and Israel has no intention of changing the status quo with Jordan. Hadas-Handelsman said the INP remains in close contact with

him, adding that the MFA is actively encouraging the INP to try to accommodate the Waqf whenever possible.

18. (S) Comment. Gilad and Hadas-Handelsman appeared to be describing relations with two different countries. As is increasingly the case with Egypt as well, the Jordanian-Israeli security relationship remains robust while political relations are deeply troubled. At some point, the security relations will also be affected if the political ties continue to unravel. Israeli assurances, including a recent statement by PM Netanyahu denying any Israeli tunneling under the Haram, appear to fall on deaf ears in Jordan due to a lack of Jordanian trust in the GOI. We welcome Embassy Amman's assessment of how a U.S. message along the lines requested by Hadas-Handelsman would be received by the Jordanians.

CUNNINGHAM